

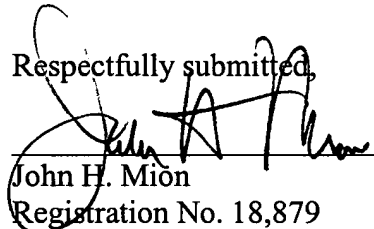
PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

REMARKS

The above amendments have been made to eliminate all multiple dependent claims (both proper and improper), thereby both eliminating the need for a multiple dependent claim fee and ensuring examination of all of claims 1-12 on the merits in the first Office Action.

The new Abstract is identical to the English-language Abstract in the International Application.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

**APPENDIX**

**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**The claims are amended as follows:**

3. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~either of claims 1 and 2~~Claim 1, wherein scrapped unsintered powders and/or powders arising from grinding (8) of fuel pellets are taken as powder scrap for the aforementioned pelletizing (20) and sintering (21) of the pretreatment.

4. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~Claim 1, wherein unirradiated (U,Pu)O<sub>2</sub> mixed-oxide nuclear fuel pellets, possibly produced by different manufacturing processes and scrapped, undergo the same pretreatment process as the aforementioned scrap pellets for the purpose of recycling them.

5. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~Claim 1, wherein up to 40% of scrap, with respect to the net production, is incorporated into the aforementioned process for manufacturing fuel pellets.

6. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~Claim 1, wherein up to 100% of scrap is incorporated into said first blend (1).

7. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~Claim 1, wherein a proportion of 99.5%, expressed as mass of PuO<sub>2</sub>, of the scraps from the aforementioned process for manufacturing fuel pellets is dry-recycled.

8. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~Claim 1, wherein a ball milling process is used for the micronization (2, 23) of the first blend and/or of the scrap pellets.

9. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~Claim 1, wherein a lubricant is added before pelletizing (6 and 20), preferably zinc stearate.

10. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~Claim 1, wherein the fuel pellets containing scraps and/or the scrap pellets are sintered (7, 21) in an argon and hydrogen atmosphere, preferably at a temperature of between 1670 and 1760°C.

## PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

11. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~Claim 1, wherein, during sintering (7, 21), the partial pressure of oxygen  $p_{O_2}$  is adjusted, preferably by humidification, in order to improve the interdiffusion of the  $PuO_2$  and  $UO_2$  oxides.

12. (Amended) The process as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 11~~Claim 1, wherein scraps and/or  $UO_2$  and  $PuO_2$  oxide powders are recovered during the process or transfer operations by means of cleanable filters, so as to recycle them into scrap pellets at the pelletizing (20) and sintering (21) step.

### **IN THE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE:**

**Please insert the attached page number 11 containing an Abstract of the Disclosure as the last page of the application.**